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I. Introduction

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Life and Works of R.K. Narayan

Rasikpuram Krishnaswamy Iyer Narayanaswamy was born in his grandmother's house in Madras on 10th October 1906. He shortened his name as R. K. Narayan at the time of publication of his wide famous novel, *Swami and Friend* in 1935. His grandmother taught him Sanskrit verses and told him stories from Indian Epics. He got love, affection as well as discipline from his grandmother. During his early teenage years, Narayan moved to Mysore where his father had become the headmaster of a prestigious high school. Mysore was very different from Madras with such natural and man made beauty and Narayan rambled around a good deal and tried writing poetry, which was much appreciated by his friends.

He learnt Hindu myths and epics from his grandmother which become the inspiring materials for his writing career later. He spent his early years with his grandmother and uncle. Later, he joined his parents, brothers and sisters in the family home in Mysore. According to his memories, he was never particularly enthusiastic about academic work. Narayan had his education entirely in south India. He attended Lutheran Missionary School and Christian college and in 1930 received his B.A. from Maharaja's college. He devoted himself to write in Modern India Literature. His mother tongue was Tamil. He settled down in Mysore where the regional language was Kannada. But he has written novels and short stories purely in English. Due to his writing in English, he became famous in the literary field.

Narayan married Rajam in 1935 and the marriage turned out to be a happy one. Rajam did not know English but she was very much interested in the work of her husband. She always remained as a source of inspiration for him. Narayan has reflected Ramaj's character and personality in many of his women characters. But

unfortunately Narayan's happiness could not last long as Rajam died due to typhoid in 1939, leaving a young daughter, Hema. Her death was a shattering experience for Narayan and taught him to the reality of life. We find a sort of autobiographical tone in some of his works especially in *The English Teacher*.

Narayan was born in a middle class Hindu family in the southern part of India and was brought up in a traditional Indian society. He was from a middle class family. The day to day life of ordinary middle class people has influenced his literary life. Not only this much, in his father's school literary, Narayan read a number of British and American magazines and novels which made him very strong in the western culture. On the other hand he was taught Hind culture by his Indian society in general and parents and grandparents in particular. So we find mixture of these two cultures in his writing that is explicit in *The Dark Room*, too.

After his Bachelor's degree, Narayan had spent a short time in teaching. Later, he became a reporter of *The Madras Journal* for a short time. In this field, he could not make money for his life. But he got chance to met with a wide variety of people, many of whom provided him the characters for his novels.

Even if Narayan began his literary career with short stories which used to appear in news papers, he has made a significant contribution to the development of the Indo-Anglian novel. Professor Walsh holds the views, "If Anand is the novelist as reformer, Raj Rao is the novelist as a metaphysical poet. Narayan is simply the novelist as novelists"(1). He has published fourteen novels, more than two hundred stories. His novel writing began with *Swami and Friends* (1935). This novel has created Narayan's fictional world which is widely famous and repeated in his every type of writing.

After his first novel, *Swami and Friends*, he moved ahead with *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), and *The Dark Room* (1938). Then, the world war II disturbed him from writing novels but the end of the war become the fertile land for his novel writing with *The English Teacher* (1945), which was followed by *Mr. Sampath* (1949), *The Financial Expert* (1952), and *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man Eater of Malgudi* (1962), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), *The Painter of Signs* (1976), *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983), *Talkative Man* (1986), and *The World of Nagraj* (1990) etc. are his major fictional works.

Apart from novels, R.N. Narayan has great contribution in short stories, memoirs, essays and travelogues. *A Horse and two Goats* (1970), *Malgudi Days* (1982), *An Astrologer's Day*, *Grandmother's Tale* and *Under the Banyan Tree* etc. are the collections of his famous short stories. Similarly, *My Dateless Diary* and *The Emerald's Journey* are his travel books. His collections of essays are: *Next Sunday, Reluctant Guru, A Writer's Nightmare, A Story tellers World* and *Salt Sawdust.* Also, he revived the classic Indian epic like the *Ramayana* (1972) and the Mahabharata (1978) condensing the length of the works and setting in modern surroundings.

His Style of Writing

R.K Narayan portrays social realism in his writing but not photographic reality; he rather represents reality, which is artistic. In this sense, he differs from the French realists and naturalists who were interested in the naked realism of life. According to Bhatnagar, "Narayan depicts a kind of realism which is something more than reportage"(24). Similarly another critic, William Walsh observes "… the religious sense of Indian myth is part of Narayan's grip of reality"(98).

Narayan blends his theme and style. He uses simple diction that mirrors the daily life of the middle class people of Malgudi. The Malgudi of his novels in Indian

is microcosm. Like Hardy's Wessex, Malgudi is a recurrent local of his novels. It is the symbol of Indian reality. What happens in Malgudi, is in fact what happens to the Indians in general. His novels are set in the imaginary town, Malgudi which reflects the typical Indian way of living that is colored with the touch of modernity in almost all of his novels.

N.N. Sharan puts forth his view regarding the style and technique of novel *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, like "Here we meet a different Narayan who not only asks fundamental questions about good and evil but also furnish his own answer to them. While doing so, he bases his narrative technique on an ancient Hindu myth"(228). In this way, Sharan regards the novel perfectly based on Hindu myth of Bhasmasura. Even if he studied western culture, he deeply attached with his Hindu religion and tradition which are clearly visualized in his writings.

Likewise, Shashi Tharoor expresses his view similar to Sharan. He says, "Narayan follows the familiar pattern of take from the *Puranas* where a demon gets too powerful, threatens the heaven with his elemental forces but finally goes up in the air like a bubble in the sea leaving the universes as calm as before". (380)

Narayan basically focuses on religious themes like renunciation, incarnation; re-birth ahimsa and the law of Karma, female issue, marriage and so on. Irony, humor and myth are also some components for picturing the ageless rich heritage of Indian culture and tradition. He has projected his world of values juxtaposing tradition and modernity in its different aspects. In that respect, he also mixes certain spiritual and secular ideas with which Indians are normally familiar. William Walsh observes, "The religious sense of Indian myth is part of Narayan's grip of reality and his particular view of human life and his individual way of placing and ordering human experience". (14)

He handles English language successfully. His English language is simple and clear. For Narayan English is an absolutely 'Swedeshi language.' He uses 'Bharat brand of English which should reflect the prevailing Indian conditions. Due to the future of humor and irony, his technique becomes impressive. Mukherjee says:

> His ironic dimension is an integral part of his comic vision. He explores the tremendous possibilities of the comic in the common place world of Malgudi. He is essentially a comic ironist who has taken a keen interest in Indian life in and around Malgudi. His humorous portrayal of outer and inner conflicts of man with touches of pathos and irony demonstrates his insight into the human reality. (5)

Furthermore Hariprasanna comments on Narayan's techniques and styles as, "He is an enchanter, it is beautiful written, funny and haunting evoking in marvelously rich detail the atmosphere of a small town in southern Indian and creating a magical world into which the reader is instantly drawn"(188). He praises Narayan's craftsmanship and finds him as an enchanter who meticulously observes the atmosphere of small town in southern India Malgudi with very funny and haunting story.

Narayan basically focuses upon Hindu myth in his writings that is blended with some of the modern characteristics in most all of his novels and short stories. He exploits some traditional characters and some others have modern influence. Due to the two modes of life, there are conflicts in the novels. *The Dark Room* can be taken as epitome of such mingles. Savitri, the protagonist of the novel, is a symbol of traditional Indian womanhood. She is deeply devoted to Ramani, her husband. She takes her husband as God, but on the other hand her husband, Ramani wants to be free from traditional religious life style. He rarely pays his attention to his wife and

children. Similar quality can be seen in his next novel *The English Teacher*. In the novel, Susila is living a traditional life, but her husband Krishna is influenced with western way of life.

Review of Literature

Many critics have thrown light in their own manner on R.K. Narayan in general and *The Dark Room* in particular. One of the critics Graham Greene observes a strange mixture of humor, sadness and beauty in his novel. Greene comments to Narayan as, "complete objectivity, complete freedom from comments". (52)

Narayan is a conscious literary artist whose novelistic form is beautifully determined by the dramatic need and nature of his materials. Prof. K.R.S. Iyenger rightly remarks, "He is one of the few writers in India who seek their craft seriously, constantly striving to improve the instrument, pursuing with a sense of dedication what may often seem to be the mirage of technical perfection". (32)

Narayan has enjoyed international fame for his literary contribution. He is greatly admired by different writers. Graham Greene regards Narayan as, "Since the death of Evelyn Waugh, Narayan is the novelist I most admire in the English language"(22). Not only this much, he has received many popular awards in his life. His eminent awards are: National Prize of Indian Literary academy, Sahitya Academy Award, Padma Bhushal National Association of Independent School Award etc.

Narayan was a man with sharp and minute observation. His observation has been reflected in his description of character and milieu. He was a very simple and gentle. He is religious by nature. He has given vivid ideas of south Indian life style in most of his novels. His presentation of life is realistic. As William Walsh observes, ". . . the religious sense of Indian myth is part of Narayan's grip of reality and his

particular view of human life and his individual way of placing and ordering human existence". (14)

In most of his novels through the use of imaginary town Malgudi, he attempts to represent patriarchal society that could not really accept female as an Agent in India. Narayan's novel *The Dark Room* epitomizes the patriarchal mechanism of the Indian Society. According to S. Krishna, "Narayan's third novel, *The Dark Room* is the story of a woman, who is neglected by her husband, decides unsuccessfully to run away from home". (xi)

Some other critics are very much interested with R.K Narayan's imaginary town, Malgudi where most of his novels are set. It remains a dream country in which physical features of various places are fused in a single detain. Nagendra Nath Sharan understands it as:

> The physical geography of Malgudi is never dealt with as a set piece but allows revealing itself beneath and between the events; one comes to have a strong feeling for the place's identity. The detail suggests surely and economically, the special flavor of Malgudi, a blend of oriented and pre-1914 British, like an Edwardian mixture of sweet mangoes and malt vinegar. (68)

Sharan further stressed the universal quality of Malgudi, "Whatever happens in India happens in Malgudi and whatever happens in Malgudi happened everywhere". (24) Narayan is compared with Thomas Hardy and William Faulkner who also created imaginative setting like "Wessex"and "Yoknapatawpha"respectively. Narayan has beautifully created his imaginary town of Malgudi in which the action of his novels takes place. S.Krishna says:

One of the important characters of the novel is that it gives its personages, a local habitation and a name. Narayan follows the line of Hardly and achieves his localization. Faulkner is another brilliant name in America who has an excellent mastery of place in fiction. So, is the case with Narayan in India. Faulkner's fictional place is Yoknapatawpa; Narayan's fictional setting is Malgudi (27).

Narayan's novels are flexible enough to be used in a variety of ways. His fictional work ranges from tragedy to tragic-comedies to pure comedy. His fictions explore idea, and ideologies, that is simply a mirror of life drifting into fantasy and presents a slice of life or to some extent romantic image. Narayan's fictions are domestic comedies rather than tragedies. According to Sisir Kumar Das, "Narayan's fictional world is world of comedy that springs form community with markedly traditional mores standards of behaviors and beliefs". (71)

Narayan is primarily an artist with comic version. He has delighted his countless   readers with simple language and ironic comment. Shashi Tharoor, an Indian critic, praises Narayan's craftsmanship in this way, "R.K. Narayan is a master of story teller whose language is simple and unpretentious, whose wit is critical yet healing, and whose characters are drawn with sharp precision and subtle irony"(24).

Before reading Narayan's third novel *The Dark Room,* some critics find it an insignificant novel. One of such critics is A.N. Kaul who observes it, "The point is that, like Mahatma, *The Dark Room* happens to be a weak and insignificant novel, and it is obvious that Ibsenism or the feminist idea can inspire. Narayan's imagination as little as the political idea of Gandhism."(Sharan 73). But this novel can not be read only from the perspective of Ibsenism or femistic view. We can study this book using the glass of modernity.

R. K. Narayan is the foremost indo-English Novelist of today. He is essentially ironic in his vision of life. His stories and novels as Bhatnagar believes, "reflect his awareness about the fundamental disharmonies and absurdities which life and world are constantly providing us. He accepts the reality of life ungrudgingly taking things as they come to him"(99). Nowhere has he seemed to be writing with an idea in his mind to rectify the situation or the word. In fact this type of realization and attitude helped his form a balanced view of life and situations. He wrote nearly for fifty years. Actually, it is the proper use of the eye, the mind and the heart behind all his writings which reflect the excellence of his craftsmanship throughout.

Therefore, the earlier researchers haven't talked about the novel from the perspective of the modernity that enables the researcher to work on the field.

Story Synopsis

The story of the novel, *The Dark Room* by R.K. Narayan, mainly revolves around the main characters Ramani, a modernist, and Savitri, a traditional Hindu woman. Ramani thinks of himself as a man full of everything. Ramani does not want to bear responsibility in a family, whereas Savitri intends to bear it. Savitri looks after not only her husband and children, but also whole household activities, which will turn into a mess without her presence. Everywhere she presents herself as Sharan comments, "obedient, loyal, responsible"(5) and hence a traditional Hindu woman. Here is the emergence of marital discord because of the couple's divergent beliefs.

Ramani, a senior officer with the Engladia Insurance Company, keeps himself observed in his work all day and night. He does not let the space for emotions and feelings. Whenever his children see him, "they're scared of him"(67) as Narayan comments but the kids have proximity with the mother, for she pays adequate attention to them. Modernity does not allow the emotions and feelings to be bloomed

but always focuses on profits, benefits and reason that are represented by Ramani whereas Savitri, a traditional Hindu woman cultivates emotional qualities like love, affection, devotion, etc. in her.

Ramani is a stubborn fellow, he does not tolerate any advice from anyone when he passes his matriculation, his father advises him to continue his further study, but Ramani comes out a bitter reply, "I know better what I must do"(116). He often feels that his wife has no right to object to his friendship with Shanta Bai. He frequently comes home with his friends without notifying his wife that brings difficulty in Savitri to serve the guests properly. But Ramani is oblivion towards Savitri's plight. Here Narayan comments on Ramani's "He just picked up a friend at the club and brought him home for dinner. It made him furious if it was suggested that he should give notice: we are not so down –and-out yet as not to afford some extra food without having to issue warnings before hand"(10). He seems very much hypocritical in the sense that he does not want his guests be known about the lack of foods in his house. He does not concern himself with his family nor does he want them to know anything concerning his office. He does not try to listen to the advice of his wife, he is unaware of his children's health, education etc., he even neglects the betterment of his office. He recommends appointing not an efficient employee for the office, but the docile person who can be easily exploited. Here we can see individualism in him because everywhere he performs his task in his own decision.

Ramani wants to go cinema with his wife but wants to leave to children behind. He says, "The children can go some other day. Not a fly extra now"(20). But Savitri wants to go with them. When Savitri listens to her husband's desire to go leaving children at home she says "Oh"(20) unhappily. She knows it will be useless to plead. Ramani only focuses on the individual desire. He wants to be isolated even

from his children. He wants to enjoy his life in his own way even neglecting everyone. Though his daughter, Samati, pleads with him, he is indifferent towards her appeal. It clearly displays that he does not pay any attention towards the emotion and feelings of his children, rather he emphasizes on his freedom and thus he seems irresponsible.

Savitri is not in the habit of taking meal before her husband takes. Ramani correctly remarks, "What a dutiful wife! Would rather starve than precede her husband. You are really like some of the women in our ancient books"(101). It can easily be understood by the words of Ramani that Savitri has the traditional belief in regard to her husband in every way. But Ramani always gets entertainment with modern achievements like car, films, electricity without caring other members of his own family. His life has been dramatically changed due to these scientific products. He always gets expedition in his car and is familiar with the outer modern world. On the contrary, his wife is confined within the four walls of the house; she hardly gets time for outing with her husband. She spends her time in the traditional way. Here, we can see the total disparity between the husband and wife where husband representing modernity and wife representing the traditional Hindu culture. Because of these two different poles they are always in conflict.

Shanta Bai who has been recruited by Ramani as part of his company brings about the serious tension in the scenario. Employing a new face, even a female creates rumors which eventually even Savitri comes to know about. Gangu, her close friend, reports to Savitri as, "Don't think I am gossiping, but there was another person with him; perhaps it is that person about whom people are talking all this nonsense. I didn't want to tell you but I thought you might as well know, because what harm is there?"(98). She starts suspecting Ramani and her suspicions are soon proved right

that he has made an extra-marital relationship with her. Tired of being ignored by a careless husband who even does not hesitate to beat his small child Babu severely, she decides to leave the home. She can't bear her husband's behavior and says, "Do you think that I will stay in your house, breathe the air of your property, drink the water here, and eat food you buy with your money? No, I'll starve and die in open, under the sky, a roof for which we need be obliged to no man"(87-88).

Even if she leaves her home, she immediately realizes that it is a sin to leave her husband and children in the cold. Rather she decides to end her life and jumps in Sarayu River, however, she is saved by Mari, a part time thief but a blacksmith by profession. He takes her to his home where she is well looked after by his wife, Ponni. Deeply influenced by the traditional concept of untouchability, higher caste Savitri denies taking any sort of food offered by the blacksmiths, Mari and Ponni. When Savitri denies taking anything from them, Ponni rightly comments, "I see you are a Brahmin and won't stay and eat with us. I will ask someone of your own caste to receive you". (106)

Savitri gets job in a local temple for a meager earning, she finally believes that she has the strength to live all by herself and make sense of her life. But she is soon overcome by her desire for her children. She says, "I must see them; I must see Babu, I must see Sumati, and I must see Kamala. Oh"(142). She ultimately decides to return home. Because of her submissive traditional quality, she relegates her own ego and surrenders to the Hindu religion and tradition not to her husband. But on the other hand modern character Ramani never surrenders in front of tradition that is represented by his wife, Savitri.

II. Theoretical Modality

Indian Tradition

In the past, ancient Indian society was multi-religious and multi-linguistic in nature. We can easily understand this from Sanskrit, Pali and Tamil literature. Writers descried not only their people and landscape, but also showed a wide interest in the natural surrounding, and the people of another land. Thus in '*Ramayana'* there is the description of hilly people, the forest dwellers and heaven, the world of God. The writing reflected the traditional Indian belief in God. Furthermore the writings of ancient India also reflected political and literal unity-in-diversity and diversity-in – unity of Indian culture and society.

Traditional Indian society is in the bound of peasant-landlord relationship; it observed the caste system placing Brahmans and Chhetrias at the upper level and Baishya and Shudra at the lower place of social hierarchy. This hierarchy was mainly based on occupation and birth. Charles Van Doren comments, "One is not only born a Shudra; one also becomes a Shudra by the occupation one follows, which Shudra alone must follow and which only Shudra may follow"(7). There were certain occupations that upper-class people simply did not follow. Similarly different classes also used to eat different foods differently and had different customs in family life. The ancient cultures of the Indian subcontinent might have been the first to discover the powerful means of maintaining social order. Doren believes, "Class differentiation is the great foe of the equally great idea of social equality". (7)

Traditional Indian social economy was based on agriculture that provided food for large population. They had dug ditches and canals to irrigate their farms. Due to the lack of modern system of agriculture, there was the mass poverty in India. Torlok Singh closely observes and says, "Mass poverty in India is basically and to an

overwhelming degree, a rural problem. It is implicit in the present structure and economic basis of our rural society. If we are to abolish poverty, we must rebuild our social and economic foundations."(1)

Indian people had a custom to marry their daughters before puberty, and parents who had not succeeded in finding husbands for daughters past the age of puberty, were regarded as guilty of a great sin. According to M. N. Srinivas, "Bradmin marriage is in theory, indissoluble, and a Brahmin widow, even if she be a child widow, is required to have her head shaved, and to shed all jeweler, and ostentation in clothes."(Aiyappan and Ratnam 78). She was regarded as inauspicious. Sex life was denied her. Among Hindus generally there was a preference for virginity in brides, chastity in wives.

The institutions of the low castes were more liberal in the spheres of marriage and sex then those of the Brahmins. In the case of the low caste marriage and sex Srinivas comments, "Post puberty marriages do occur among them, widows do not have to shave their heads, and divorce and widow marriage are both permitted and practiced"(Aiyappan and Ratnam 78). Generally speaking, their sex code was not as harsh as among Brahmins.

Brahmin women used to perform a number of religious vows, some of which was to secure a long life for the husband. A woman's hope used to predecease her husband, and thus avoid becoming a widow. As Srinivas comment, "Women who predecease their husbands are considered both lucky as well as good, while widowhood is attributed to sins committed in a previous incarnation". (Aiyappan and Ratnam 79)

A wife who used to show devotion to her husband was held up as an ideal, as a *Pativrata*, that is, one who regarded the devoted service of her husband as her

greatest duty. There are many myths describing the devotion and loyalty of some sainted women to their husbands. Furthermore, Indian society was deeply rooted on the religion and superstition. They believed on God, worshipping to God was like daily activities. They used to celebrate different festivals which themselves were based on religion.

When the Indian society was religious, superstitious, patriarchal, agro-based social structure, discrimination in terms of caste, deeply affected by poverty, then the writing of that period reflected the same issues.

When India was colonized by British, the Indian tradition was slowly and gradually affected by the western culture. Due to the mistreatment of western people to Indian, they are tortured. When Indian social tradition was dismantled, the Indian religion was mocked. During this period, Indian ethos gradually underwent a sea change from the stock response of defeat and frustration and the trauma of inferiority feeling to a new found self-awareness and self-confidence. Indian society started to learn from western society and its experiences, and Indian writers experience progress in the form of imitation and assimilation in creation. The ordeal of freedom struggle, the communication problem, plight of untouchables, the landless poor, economically oppressed and exploited people were the exponent of colonized society and the literature it has produced.

Indian colonized society was in contact with the multitudinous riches of European especially, English literature and culture. People started to think that to be westernized in the language and culture is to command more and more prestige. In short, Indian social life and its literature during colonial period is nothing but mere imitation of their colonial master, their literature and society. Indian society had been

blinded by the glare of western civilization. So they took it as something good and prestigious and started to follow it.

Modern Influence in Indian Society

So far as the concern of the emergence of modernity in India, we should take into account the scientific and technological development in advance. Modernity is the transcendence of the past and reorientation towards the future. Modernity in India came to have been recognized as synonymous to westernization. The emphasis on English education in India also played a vital role in changing Indian society and people towards westernization and modernization. However, modernity should not be identified with formal and generic innovation but has to be related with a shift in experience, a change in the relation between the past and the present. Modernity is the consciousness of new age, new sensibility, and sense of the new attitude towards the past as well as future with experiences of life.

Cricket is another symbol of modern Indian society. Today, the extraordinary popularity of cricket in India is clearly tied up with national sentiments. Modern Indian people are almost crazy with the game. But in the early history of the game in India, cricket fostered two other kinds of loyalty. The first was religious identities. The second, rather more abstractly instantiated in the sport, was loyalty to empire. Hindus, Parsis, Muslims, the Europeans, and eventually the rest were organized into cricket ethnic groupings, some of which included antagonists in which players as well as crowds learned to think of themselves as Hindu, Muslim and Parsis in contrast with the Europeans.

For the colonized, cricket become a matter of dignity. They tried to equalize themselves with the colonizers by competing in the field of it which colonizer used to think as a modern game and only in their access. Child psychology of colonizer can

not remain indifferent with such matters of dignity. They used to think that playing and watching cricket is to become modern. So they are obsessed with it.

Modernity was a technological advancement which contributed in the development of electricity, transportation, commutations in India that made life of Indian people more advance. Indian modernity is also the advancement over the earlier literature and the progress in the different fields in accordance with time. With the influence of modernity in literature, the relationship between the husband and wife; tradition and modernity; cities and the villages; print culture and oral culture; are directly affected. Even the trivial actions, sufferings and protests became the theme. All these changes were inevitable results of technological advancement and intervention in the production of literature and also the changes in the social fabric that a new education and new administrative system has brought about.

The two centuries of British rule has created tension in the psyche of Indian elite: it wants to assert its own distinctiveness and at the same time is attracted by the power of India. All its side of progress and all its concepts and institutions is borrowed by India. The modernity in literature both as an experience and project comes out of the continuous tensions, rather than the synthesis between these two worlds more or less identified as opposites. Not only the models of literary genre are borrowed from European literature but also the debates relating to social authority and individual freedom are the realms of private and public, myth and history also characterize the colonial Indian culture. As Gayatri Spivak asserts:

> The Indian anxiety for the west and its dilemma of the modernity has creates an unresolved tension in Indian social life . . . traditional Indian life world and emerging modern literature. The urge of imitation has often overcome Indian writers and the search for modernity has been

elusive. In India, society and its literature emerged as an assimilation of the nature of imperial regime. The issue of sex and morality became quite controversial and even the icon of modernity among certain groups of Indian writing. (13)

The Indian writers realized that eroticism was different from the frank portrayal of sex, the former aims at evoking certain emotive effects; the latter is part of exploration of relationship between individual and society. The sexual relationship was related to change in experience, but it had created tension between the social authority and individual freedom. In literature, sex assumed a place of importance not because there was any radical change in social relationship but certainly there was any radical change in artistic consciousness. The treatment of sex became the indicator of modernity, and changing perceptions of man-women relationship. In modern time, Indian society has become more transparent to sexual matters.

The Indian modernity emerged from Indian society's changing attitude towards west, its transformation from agricultural state to semi-Industrial state, establishment of financial institutions and Banking and society. As Appadurai Says:

> The experience of modernity is local, but locality itself has undergone a fundamental set of changes over the past five hundred years. We are in the process of witnessing a fundamental transformation in the very nature of world systems and global process. Various forms of global interactions have always been with us, and so have various forms of world systems. Even before maritime, expansion of the west in the sixteenth century complex global formation did exist, but we are only now beginning to theorize the shift from these early global process to those that constitute global process today. (14)

The Dark Room by R. K. Narayan revolves around the tension between modernity and tradition. Since the novel was written around 1930s, and the Indian society was in the transitional period of tradition and decolonization, the novel depicts the dynamics of the Indian society. Indian people developed consciousness about colonialism. As a result, India got independence.

The novel centers on the tension between the male and female, mainly represented by Ramani and Savitri respectively. Ramani, being fascinated by the modern life style, enjoys liaison, modern movies, parties etc. On the other hand, Savitri's faith on religion, her blind fidelity and the roles prescribed to the women show her inclination to the tradition. In addition, Babu's craze for cricket, electricity, movies, and adoption of western system of education further highlights the influence of modernity on the male. On the contrary, Gangu's and Ponni's inclination to the traditional norms and values show that females are still traditional unlike men. Hence, I will exploit 'Modernity' as a theoretical tool to analyze the text and justify the issue.

Tradition versus Modality

Modernity is the condition of being new and innovative which has generally been opposed to tradition in contemporary analyses of social and political change. It is the consciousness of time and space, and self and others that is shared by all the human beings in the world. Modernity can be realized when tradition has been destroyed and superseded. It is a radical threat to all history and tradition.

To understand modernity clearly, we must contrast it with tradition. Tradition is social activities that are practiced for long. They are based on certain conventions and customs which contained the value in the society. According to oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary, tradition is "a belief, custom or way of doing something that has existed for a long time among a particular group of people". Generally it is based

on religion and superstition that is more rigid and dogmatic. Traditional religious and superstitious world views attempt to keep people in the condition of ignorance.

But modernity tries to demolish and replace all unnecessary superstitious social norms and values and encourages all people to be more open and keeps them away from the worthless social practices and impositions since it is break through the tradition even though it somehow has some kind of traces of tradition. According to Marshall Berman:

> The maelstrom of modern life has been felt from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing our images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle. . . (2)

The advancement of science and technology serves as the catalysts for the flourishing of modernity. Modern science, communication, philosophy, industrialization etc. stimulated the progress of human life, moreover, human consciousness. To be particular, the beginning of modernity can be traced to that intellectual fever that spread in Europe from the middle of the eighteenth century. The French Revolution of 1789 was a point in the spread of this intellectual, spiritual as well as political-economic social ferment in western society. In this regard, Raghwendra Pratap Singh puts down, "The central and the fundamental thrust of the modernity is the bold and unhesitating affirmation of the autonomy of human individual and society"(13). It is that affirmation that rejects all external authority, outside of human reason, whether of religious or of tradition.

Charles Darwin is also vibrant modern philosopher who really challenges the traditional thinking. Religion, a major part of tradition was threatened by the Darwinian theory of evolution which assumes that survival of the fittest. He subverts the traditional blind assertion of man as the descendants of God and probes the reality, that is, men are the distant relatives of apes which challenged the superstitious belief that man as the God gifted creature whereas other creatures were not. By challenging this concept as Charles Darwin equalizes all the creatures, "declaring that all the species had come about through evolution on the basis of natural selection. Even man. That was hard to swallow"(Charles Van Doren 280). Especially religious people got great blow upon their beliefs which were not scientific at all, and could not justify using any philosophical reason.

Karl Marx, a German philosopher, is best regarded as the upholder of modernity. He challenges the Hegelian idea and asserts, "It is the matter that determines consciousness not the idea"(Gaarder 397). He attacks the bourgeoisie by blaming them as the exploiters of the proletarians. He redefines the hitherto society and explores the perennial conflict between the 'Haves' and 'Haves not'. That is to say, Karl Marx, as a purveyor of modernity, contributes a great deal to fill up the consciousness in the proletarians. Similarly, Freud, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard are, among other, the outstanding contributors for the emergence of modernity. Freud breaks the binary between savage and civilization and asserts that all men are guided by the unconscious, which is replete with sexual instincts. He further claims, "the conscious constitutes only a small part of the human mind. The conscious is like the tip of the iceberg above sea level". (Gaarder 435)

Likewise, for the advancement of modernity, the credit goes to Nietzsche. He dismantles the blind faith; the western thought has brought up with it, on religion and

God. He stands as a modern figure when he advocates the death of God. Meanwhile, Kierkegaard emerges with a new vision of human existence. He undermines the concept of objective knowledge and universal truth, but emphasizes on the multiple truths and subjective knowledge as the need of the day. According to Kierkegaard, 'rather than searching for the Truth with a capital 'T' it is more important to find the kind of truths that are meaningful to individual's life. It is more important to find 'the truth for me'. (Gaarder 379)

Thus, modernity always stands in opposition to tradition, since the former comes up with a deconstructive strategy of status-quo. On the contrary, the latter often clings to, "religious world views, as attempts to keep people in a condition of ignorance and superstition . . ."(Hamilton 35). Commenting on the relation of modernity with tradition Horold Rosenberg writes, "It is a tradition of overthrowing tradition". (Berman 16)

However, Octavio Paz is not happy with the mission of modernity which aims to renew the tradition. He has lamented that modernity is "cut off from the past and continually hurtling forward at such a dizzy pace that it can not take root, that it merely survives from one day to the next"(Berman 35). That is to say, modernity neither roots itself anywhere permanently nor does it restrict itself to a specified field. It is a renewed consciousness in social norms, values (culture), life world, ideology, tradition etc. something which is modern in the present turns out to be obsolete in the future. Therefore, I think that the spirit of modernity relies on contingency of renewal or reformation.

Thus, the concept of modernity, though originally dates back to the Enlightenment is not tied up with a particular time, space and realm. Although it is ostensibly a western trend, it is pervasive across the world and the form of modernity

varies from one society to another. In this regard, Arjun Appadurai and Carli A. Breckenridge view:

> Modernity is now everywhere, it is simultaneously everywhere, and it is interactively everywhere. But it is not only everywhere, it is also in a series of somewhere, and it is through one such somewhere, India, that this volume enters the global reality of modernity and for such a localized entry we propose an other general category. (2)

Overall, despite the ostensible differences in the notion of modernity, the aforementioned critics characterize modernity as a deconstructive sprit, which critiques the traditional social orders and a traditional set of beliefs. Modernity adopts empiricism and rationalism as the touchstones to critique or judge the religious beliefs, societal mores and values and the position of man in the universe. With reference to the subversion of tradition, Marshal Berman comments:

> All fixed, fost-frozon relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air all that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face . . . the real conditions of their lives and their relation with their fellow men. (21)

In other words, modernity is not such a notion which can be stable; rather it is the time consciousness. It is the, "ephemeral, the fleeting, the contingent"(116), according to Michael Foucault. Today's beliefs, ideas and outlook may turn out to be traditional in no time. Therefore, "modernity excludes itself from clinging to the present. Instead, its task is to heroize the present". (Foucault 117)

However, regarding modernity, the theorists have different views. Habermas, though regards modernity as an incomplete project and traces its root to the Renaissance, he attributes the formal development of modernity to the Enlightenment. The term, 'modernity' used to be defined in relation to the past, but Kant uses the 'Enlightenment' and 'modernity' interchangeably, and asserts that enlightenment is the break away with the tradition. Hence, since the Enlightenment, modernity is viewed as an autonomous project and something which is particularly new and distinct. The Enlightenment paves the way for the advancement of science, art and morality. Habermas, albeit contends the newness as the project of modernity, sees lack of the communicative rationality resulted from the autonomous development of science art and morality. Then, Habermas emphasizes on the integrity among them. He further views the aim of modernity as the unifying force of these discrete realms.(284)

Likewise, Lyotard's basic premise rests on the access to modernity. Yet, he talks about the tenets of postmodernism and believes that postmodernism is the nascent state of modernity (Lyotard 245). His idea, the critiquing and experimenting, the spirit of postmodernity, gives birth to modernity when it is at apex. Although Habermas and Lyotard argue each other, their ultimate essence orients to modernity. Both of them regard modernity as the consciousness of overall aspects of life, which is only possible via critiquing the tradition.

Similarly, Foucault, regarding modernity brings forth the idea of Baudelaire, "modernity is characterized in terms of consciousness of the discontinuity of time: a break with tradition and a feeling of novelty"(Foucault 261). Foucault further refutes modernity as a specific epoch, rather opines that it is a set of characteristics of an epoch. Moreover, he coincides with Habermas, Kant and Lyotard when he puts down,

"Modernity is an 'attitude' a way of thinking and feeling, a way of acing and behaving . . ."(Foucault 262)

Development is pre-requisite of modernity-development on science, media, communication that radically changes the human life and makes it more standard and easier than that of earlier; scientific development changes the human life along with human psyche which helps to develop all human creativities. To be modern is transformation of ourselves and the world that threat to destroy "everything we have, everything we know, everything we are"(Berman 1).

Due to the scientific development, the universe became a small village where all cultures mix into one in which Marx said, 'all that is solid melts into one' (qtd. in Berman 1). Modernity unties all human beings. Scientific discoveries, transportation, communication etc. make the world small and single. Different kinds of mass media which are the result of science like radio, computer film and television have control of our lives without ordinarily intruding on them. These media can't be avoidable because they are around us. It has made mass more creative, safer, more healthful, and richer in creative possibilities. It is the media that makes the people up to date. They give the hot news to human being so that people can easily mobilize themselves in the complex world.

In the modern world, media plays significant role in educating the people. Even those people, who can't manage time for going college, are also getting knowledge at home through media. So media has contributed to knowledge and education of the people. Because of the media, we understand the world better than our grandparents were. Charles Van Doren says, "Because of the media we understand democracy better than almost anyone understood it a century ago. Because of the media, we have a deeper distrust of war"(274). It is the media that

speaks against the tyranny and all kind of injustices. So it is the advocator of democracy and freedom.

Electricity is another significant marker of modernity. It was discovered by Benjamin Franklin in the 1750s which has had a tremendous impact on the history of mankind because it as Charles Van Doren argues that "dissolved the difference between night and day and masked the change of the seasons"(270). Moreover, it provided the new source of energy which helped to intensify the industrial revolution that dramatically changes human life. Today, millions of city dwellers never experience a dark night. It reduces the dependence only in fossil fuels for energy. Thousands of scientific modern machines are run by electricity that is more advance and cheaper than fossil fuels.

Winter was not just cold but also dark and any evil might lurk in the dark. That way the concept of priests and other so called educated people but it became mere superstition when electricity brightened the night and made it like the day. Electricity not only lightened the dark but also converted cold into worm and vice versa. In fact, the world is benefited much from the discovery of electricity, which is one of the most important aspects of modern life. It has radically changed the face of the earth.

Similarly, transportation is a milestone of modernity that made the world small and easier than that of earlier. Due to the development of different sorts of vehicles, we, modern people can travel throughout the world easily. Various vehicles like aircraft, ships, and land vehicles made human life doubtlessly comfortable. It is the modern science that makes it possible. It has brought revolutionary change in the traditional concept of human being, for example moon used to be taken as God, especially in Hindu religion, but modern scientists have been thinking about the

settlement on the lap of moon. It is one of the greatest challenges to tradition due to scientific development, which is case of modernity.

Despite being facilitator of modern life, media along with electricity has made life artificial. People are interested to leave imaginative life as in the film. Such imagination has lured for a worthless copy which is one of the components of the destruction of civilization and morality. Due to such kind of temptation, people almost forget their duties and responsibilities. They want to live isolated life in imagination.

Because of the Industrial Revolution in the Eighteen century, human beings have been getting into new life. Social and political changes and economic development were the causes of Industrial Revolution. It brought both positive and negative impacts in human life and nature. Before industrial revolution, the life was so hard; people used simple machines to make their works easier. Socio-economic side was very poor. Agro-based economy had not maintained the standard of life. There was no development of transportation and communication. But after the dawn of industrial revolution, great changes emerged as a result, life become comfortable and smooth. It brought many social changes. The middle class grew and progressed rapidly. They owned most of the factories, they hired the workers in low payment and treated them as objects and handled the big industries, mines, banks and what not. In it, Marx believes, "The bourgeoisie has turned away from the family its sentimental vial, and reduced the family relation to a mere money relation"(23). The power holders treat their family members themselves in terms of money then how can they treat workers as human beings. So we can say that such kind of modernization has mechanized the modern life.

The owners had the concept of business and also had the capacity to manipulate the workers and the government. Due to this the owner became fatter and fatter but poor workers turned into poorer. Van Doren severely comments on such mistreatment by saying, " human beings had not yet learned how factor-induced specialized labor also destroys the souls of human beings by treating them as the parts of a machine"(216). This is the negative aspect of industrial revolution that gave birth to the capitalism. Often factory workers have to work long hours under unhealthy condition.There was and still is a debate about the beginning and ending of modernity. Critics like Habermas believe that, "modernity is the consciousness of time"(74).

They believe that modernity is just departure from old ideas. Greek time was modern because it was separated from pagan past. Similarly Renaissance was modern because it was new and different from middle age. It means modernity was defined in relation to past. But Kant believes that modernity is a period that " began from eighteenth century and ended in twentieth century"(17). For him there was not or can't be modern before and after Enlightenment period. Unlike Kantian belief, Michael Foucault believes that modernity is "consciousness of discontinuity"(113) that is simply a break from tradition; it could be in Greek period, in Renaissance, in eighteenth century and so on. He believes that one modernity is different from other; it means there is plurality of modernity.

Hence, without transcending the traditional norms and values, modernity is impossible. On the other hand, tradition can't remain constant for forever. Furthermore, once modern turns into tradition along with the change of time. It does not mean, modernity stands on entirely new foundation but there is some reformations. So in the society, there is practice of tension between tradition and

modernity which the researcher tries to show in the research carried out on R. K.

Narayan's *The Dark Room.*

III. Textual Analysis

Tradition and Modernity: An Analysis of R. K. Narayan's *The Dark Room*

Literature is the manifestation of contemporary social realities where the writer is born and grown up. It reflects the social structure, framework, and customs. It carries out the social ideologies in general and people's behaviors, needs and wants etc. in particular. In this regard, R. K. Narayan's writings are the reflection of Indian society of 1930s where we can find two ways of life that are traditional and modern. Narayan depicts peripheral and dynamic effects of modernization, progress on the village, caste system, rural poverty, male dominated society, conflict between ancestral orthodox and rebellious individualism, modern hypocrisy, scientific development and its effect in modern society, various exploitation in the modern world especially Indian society before and after colonial period.

In all of the Narayan's novels, Indianness is reflected in various ways. He wrote many novels and short stories addressing humanity as a central theme. He had started writing under the influence of events occurring around him. His main concern is on the small segments of the Indian middle-class society and its mores and traditions as well as influence of modern way of life. The theme that has mostly been projected in his novels is the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity in its different aspects. Though he writes in English, his attitude towards the western world is bitter. Especially, he criticizes the ex-colonizers of India who invaded the local culture and tradition of India. So, we can find the confrontation between the orient and the occident in most of his novels. It means there is tension between Indian tradition and western forms of life.

To show the traditional and western forms of life within single society, he creates imaginary setting of Malgudi which one or other way depicts the Indian

reality. In fact, Malgudi is an Indian small town that stands at a nicely calculated comic distance between the east and west or tradition and modern. We see the deep reason for Narayan's choice of the small-town. The superficial influence of western or modern forces on it do not destroy its basic characters. It still retains and displays a more human way of life. Narayan himself describes Malgudi in the novel *The Dark Room:*

> Malgudi in 1935 suddenly came into line with the modern age by
> building a well equipped theatre-the palace Talkies-which simply
> brushed aside the old corrugated-sheet-roofed Variety Hall, which
> from time immemorial had entertained the citizens of Malgudi with
> tattered silent films. (22)

It means Malgudi is India which was traditional but slowly and gradually is becoming modern. Here, People are enjoying with film along with other scientific products.

Tradition and Modernity: Two Modes of Life

The Dark Room depicts two polar modes of Indian society, the traditional and the modern, which are represented by female characters like Savitri, Sumati, Kamala, Ponni, Gangu and male characters like Ramani, Babu, Mari etc. respectively. They come from different worlds with disparate outlook that poses a continuous conflict between and among them. They symbolize a contrast between two worlds-one traditional and other modern.

Savitri, a devoted wife of Ramani and a good mother of their three children-Babu, Sumati and Kamala, represents traditional Indian society. She is loudly and deeply devoted to her husband and children. She goes on a futile quest to maintain good relationship with her husband where as her husband, Ramani by being

influenced with modern world, does not like to confine within the social responsibility. Thus, he transcends the social rules and regulation and establishes extramarital relationship with Shanta Bai, one of his staff in his office, Engladia Insurance Company. These two worlds represented by Savitri and Ramani, are totally different with each other.

The traditional world represented by Savitri always seeks to maintain social system that is status-quo at the backdrop of social, cultural and religious rules and regulations while the world represented by Ramani always seeks to subvert such traditional world under the influence of modern world. These two incompatible worlds, in the novel, always create tension between tradition and modernity

In the novel, *The Dark Room* Savitri, the female protagonist, represents the pre-modern traditional world in which she performs her role that is assigned by Hindu culture and tradition. She is presented in such a way that she can't revolt against her irresponsible husband and father because the society schooled her to be submissive, dutiful, faithful worshipper, devotee towards her husband and children. Not only this, she is depicted as an honest wife, who does not resist her husband even in the blunder committed by him. She serves him as a true devotee. She even after knowing the true nature of Ramani, does not hate him rather wants to manipulate him in her favor being honest and submissive.

Savitri is an ideal wife and mother without any selfish motives. She follows the mainstream patriarchal norms and value of Hindu culture. In Hindu culture and tradition, the wife never takes her food before her husband takes. Savitri also being such type of lady does not take her meal before her husband takes. Her husband Ramani correctly remarks, "What a dutiful wife! Would rather starve than precede her husband. You are really like some of the women in our ancient book"(11). Her

very name is mythical. In the Hindu myth Savitri is the devoted wife of Satyavan who follows Yama and succeeds in getting back the life of her husband. In the novel, the heroine Savitri has some of the precious traits of the mythical Savitri.

Romani can not understand his wife properly so fails to make his family happy. He, an essentialist, strives to dismantle Savitri's ideology by establishing extramarital relationship with Shanta Bai, his office staff. He can't limit himself to Savitri any more and taunts her time and again and treats her as a doll or means of fulfilling his physical desires, wants and necessities but on the contrary Savitri takes him an ideal husband. Thus, the tension between them mounts high as the novel moves ahead.

Ramani has illicit relation with Shanti Bai, a major cause of tension, who comes in between Ramani and Savitri and loots Savitri's happiness. It means, Shanta Bai, etymologically *Santa* means peace, is responsible for all 'Ashanti' [discord] in Savitri's life. She even fails to understand another female's plight. She freely enjoys with Savitri's husband. Ramani, due to the love of Shanta Bai, does not take any responsibility to his family whereas Savitri wants to maintain a good family relationship and attempts to keep her family harmonious and peaceful but goes in vain.

Savitri believes in religion, superstition, manners, social norms and values and ideal family and also desires these qualities within her husband. But in contrast, Ramani enjoys his life in his own way by neglecting his other members of the family. He has odd relationship with cute and somehow modern girl, Shanta Bai. They enjoy watching film even in the night. Slowly they forget their family in particular and ignore the whole society in general. They visit different places by his car. In one sense, Ramani is guided by Dionysian qualities of merrymaking and enjoying, which

are related to the ingredients to modern, while Savitri is guided by Apollonian quality of rationality that she wants to maintain ideal family members. That is what Nietzsche believes. Ramani is lustful for material life that he has expensive and furnished furniture in his house and office and also possesses a very beautiful car.

Savitri, on the other hand, is ritualistic who always attempts to win her husband's heart when she comes to know that he follows another woman, and tries her best to bring him back. She beautifies herself with new clothes, and make up with cosmetics and "sees her in the mirror in the evening"(81). She hopes her husband comes back from Shanta Bai. But all her attempts go in vain when Ramani does not come at that night. When she sees nothing in her favour, she leaves her house, husband and children. This is in one sense a challenge to the male hypocritical society. This event gives no solace to Ramani. He is tortured when his children frequently ask about their mother. "All right, father. But I have come to talk about Mother. What about her?"(155), asks Babu. He becomes more shattered when Babu asks, "Is she alive?"(155). Saying this Babu bursts into tears. In this context, Narayan rightly comments, "Ramani was slightly frightened. He himself had not been quite easy in mind since the morning"(155) because Savitri has left the house. Her escape is a kind of threat to male hypocritical social structure. This is a kind of tension that is bound to resolve in one way or other.

Savitri does not have any intention to divorce as modern people do, but she challenges just to change her husband's individual behavior so that he can give more time to his family rather than other woman. Divorce is against of Hindu religion so she never thinks of this; rather she returns her house after some days with more love and affection towards her family members as traditional woman does. It is obvious that Savitri attempts to live a free, independent life forsaking the house not because

she intends to shatter Ramani and children's life but because to protect him from being ruined due to his lustful and mechanical relationship. Hence, leaving home and entering into the dark room for Savitri, are defensive strategies to get her husband completely back to her.

Savitri tries her best to correct the ways of her husband but her efforts prove futile at the end. Hence, one day she revolts and leaves the house in a huff. At this place she reminds us of Nora Helmer in Ibsen's famous play *The Doll's House.* When her friend Gangu sees Ramani and Shanta Bai sitting together in the Tamil Picture Hall, she informs all the events to her intimate friend, Savitri. Savitri shatters when she gets the information about her husband's infidelity. It is the Hindu culture that never accepts extramarital affair. Since Savitri is the product of the same Hindu culture, she can not bear it anymore and challenges her husband and says, "Don't touch me! You are dirty, you are impure. Even if I burn my skin, I can't cleanse myself of the impurity of your touch"(102). Here, her intention is not to loose her husband but to make him correct and responsible towards her and children completely.

Hindu women are honest and want always to be honest and at the same time they hope same from the side of their husband. They can easily forgive their husband's minor mistakes but can not bear when their husband wonders hither and thither with other women. Traditional Hindu women live under the guardianship of their husband. They don't go outside even for the job. They totally depend on their husband that is why; females are always under the domination of the male. But when they find male out of the boundary of Hindu custom, they are not ready to accept such immoralities. In the novel, Savitri is the representative of Hindu female. Her husband, Ramani goes beyond the family relation. So Savitri challenges him and says, "Do you

think that I will stay in your house, breathe the air of your property, drink the water here, and eat food you buy with your money? No, I'll starve and die in the open, under the sky, a roof for which we need be obliged to no man". (87-88)

Savitri severely challenges her modern hypocritical husband Ramani who either one or other way is influenced by western way of life. When she can not correct his immoral character, she leaves her house, husband along with her dear children-Babu, Sumati and Kamala. She thinks her suicide rather than divorce which is completely against of Hindu tradition and religion. Later neither she is able to die nor able to escape from Hindu tradition. It means she returns her house and takes her responsibility that the society assigns. Returning home refers to returning to tradition.

Traditional Hindu mother and wife Savitri can not think her life in other way. Her husband and children are her world. She can't go beyond them. To listen her husband's every comments silently, to accept of his order, to wait him for food even the whole day, to take care of her children from every side etc. are her way of life. She even can't imagine her life beyond this until she knows her husband's infidelity. But on the other hand, Ramani can not limit within family boundary, Hindu religion and customs. He wants to fly beyond such traditional forms of life. He does not hesitate to keep extramarital relationship with Shanta Bai. He is totally individual that is one of the modern features. He is so much indifferent with other's behavior and especially in Savitri's tension created by himself by keeping extramarital relationship. When there is argument between them, Ramani says, "I'm very sleepy. I'm waiting to bolt the street door and go to bed; that is, if you decide to go out". (88)

This individual trait is one of the causes of tension in the novel. Traditional character Savitri tries her best to maintain social life but modern character Ramani attempts to cross it.

Traditional religious world view is greatly threatened by the Darwinian theory of evolution which assumes that 'Survival of the fittest'. Earlier, God was at the centre. People used to think that everything happens because of the desire of God but later Charles Darwin challenges it by saying, "It is not the God who makes things happen in the world but it is the nature that is at the centre"(Gaarder 409). This theory of evolution slowly and gradually affected the social order. People don't believe in God blindly when the concept of God was changed, then traditional social structure was also get changed people became secular. In this novel too we find such characters. Ramani epitomizes this issue. He does not believe on God so he enjoys his life in his own way.

Narayan presents Ramani as the representative character of Indian society who is away from traditional social structure. On the other hand, Savitri is still following the religious world order but later part of the novel she is somehow changed herself. She leaves her house at the last part of the novel even though she returns lastly. Here, we can find dynamism of Indian society that is changing slowly.

Traditional concept of male as superior and female as inferior creature, is also threatened by Freud when he says all human beings are guided by their 'Unconscious' level of mind (Gaarder 434). The contemporary society was also influenced by this theory which is explicit in the Narayan's *The Dark Room.* The female protagonist, Savitri is slowly and gradually becomes conscious over the male domination and also becomes aware about equality between male and female so she challenges the traditional society. She leaves her house and "walks down the silent street"(89). Most probably, Savitri knows that consciousness is guideline of all human beings so there is no distinction between male and female. The knowledge creates a tension in the novel.

Furthermore Savitra is a religious figure who always believes on God so worships Him. She not only gives her time to her family and herself but also to God with whom she has deep devotion. Narayan comments:

> Now Savitri had before her a little business with her God. She went to the worshipping room lighted the wicks and incense, threw on the image on the wooden pedestal handfuls of hibiscus, jasmine and nerium, and muttered all the sacred chants she had learnt from her mother years ago. (4)

But on the other hand, Ramani is secular man who does not care the God and worships Him. He has concentration only his physical needs and desires so he runs not after the God but other female outside his family. This is one of the major causes of tension in the novel.

Savitri has a belief on tradition, religion and has deep attachment on family members and always loves all human beings in general and her family members in particular. It is one way of life in the novel which sharply contrasts with the modern way of life that is led by Ramani who is self-centered, does not understand other's plight, needs and even forgets his own responsibility to his family and society. This contrast creates tension in the novel that is the representation of whole Indian society.

It is not only the case of Savitri and Ramani who are sharply divided into two modes of life that are traditional and modern, but also we can find such distinction in other characters in the novel. Babu, the only son of Savitri and Ramani, is influenced with western way of life like his father. He is deeply attracted with western form of education. He likes English medium school and also obsesses with English film very much. When his mother asks him to go for Hindi film, his remark is explicitly

negative on it. So, he says, "I don't like Indian films, mother. I would like to be sent to *Frankenstein* which is coming next week". (25)

But on the other hand, his two sisters, Kamala and Sumati are somehow traditional. They are taught to do the household work. They know the social position given to them. They think that it is the female who should do all the household work and male should not interrupt it. In *Navaratri* festiveal, there is a plan to show dolls. Kamala and Sumati think that it is their job to decorate these dolls but opposite their thinking, when Babu himself starts to decorate them, they feel unusual and say, "Are you a girl to take a hand in the doll business? Babu, go and play cricket. You are a man"(30). This sort of discrimination between male and female is completely traditional thinking which Babu directly rejects, "Shut up"(30) because he does not believe on such narrowly constructed division. Due to these two poles of life, there is tension in the novel.

Furthermore, Babu does not believe on superstition. He strongly resists to the traditional superstitious belief when there is conflict between Ranga, a cook of their family, and him. Ranga challenges to Babu but Babu takes a risk at that challenge which itself is modern quality. There is the belief that a person who looks at Ranga's eyes, he or she turns to stone. Kamala and Sumati tell him, "Many of the furlong and mile stones in the place were once human beings who had dared to look into the cook's eyes"(151). So they request the cook and say, "Forgive him for our sake . . . please take your eyes off him"(150). The modern boy does not afraid with the superstitious belief so says, "All right, I will. I am not afraid of your powers of magic"(150). Due to such different views and beliefs, there is conflict and that creates tension in the novel.

Babu is intelligent and has knowledge of modern things like electricity. On the occasion of *Navaratri* festival, the children become gay and jubilant. Babu, a boy of artistic taste, wants to decorate the house with dolls which are going to be demonstrated in the festival with electric bulbs. But traditional characters, Kamala and Sumati differ with him who think it is practically the girls' business.

Babu is also individual like his father who hates marriage much. When his mother asks about his marriage, wife and children, he asks, "Why do you always talk about marriage? I hate it. I am not going to marry even if it is going to cost me my life"(84). It means he wants freedom and does not like to take any family responsibility as western people do.

Similarly, the tension between tradition and modernity can also be seen in Ponni and her husband, Mari. Ponni is traditional and superstitious. She strongly believes on caste system who learns that Savitri is a Brahmin by caste. So she assures Savaitri of a safe stay in her house. She is ready to clear a part of the house and she says she will not go there. She further says, "I will buy a new pot for you, and rice, and you can cook your own food. I will never come that way. I will never cook anything in our house which may be repulsive to you. Please come with me"(144). Narayan's descriptions of this type have given the novel a realistic touch.

On the other hand, Mari, Ponni's husband, is somehow modern. He does not believe on such fictitious and imaginary things. Furthermore, he is not confined in the four walls of house like his wife Ponni rather he goes out for his work and sees the world better than her. He moves place to place crying, "Locks repaired, sirs, umbrellas repaired!"(161). So, he knows the world better than his wife.

Thus, R. K. Narayan implies two different modes of life that are conventional and modern represented by Savitri, Kamala, Sumati, Ponni and Ramani, Babu and

Mari respectively. Traditional characters always try to follow the old values, norms and rules and regulations of society. They are not so much influenced by the modern development and also they believe on religion, superstition and so on. On the contrary, modern characters always try to subvert traditional rules and regulations. They are highly influenced by scientific development. These two modes are the major causes of tension in the novel.

Modern Hypocrisy in the Novel

Modern people are showy in nature. They want to show outer reality even if they have no inner potentiality. It means they are hypocritical in nature. Modern Indian people also deserve such quality. In the novel, modern character Ramani epitomizes the hypocritical behaviours. Ramani does not care any lack in his house and does not like to show his weakness to his guests whom he invites. Once his cook says, "there are only a couple of potatoes"(39). He further asks with Savitri, "Do the cooking without vegetables and the mustard . . ."(39). Even such a lack is there in his house, he is so much indifferent with it but ironically he has no any feeling of responsibility to the family. Rimani as the guardian of his family is supposed to maintain peace but he destroys every harmony in the family by enjoying with another woman Shanta Bai.

Ramani often brings guests without informing his wife about the arrival of guests but he gets angry with any suggestion and does not tolerate any poor show in the dining room. Here, Narayan comments:

> Ramani was never in the habit of announcing in advance the arrival of
> a guest or of tolerating any poor show in the dining room. He just
> picked up a friend at the club and brought him for dinner. It made him
> furious if it was suggested that he should give notice. (10)

Ramani never has a habit of accepting his weaknesses. He is a single headed man who sees not beyond his desire and intension who neither accepts realities nor any one's suggestions. He always desires to hide the lacks of house to prove him as civilized; prosperous and wealthy.

Ramani is individual character who does not care other's problems, needs and responsibilities. He must have taken more responsibility of his family but he is indifferent towards it. He does not care his children's health but does not fail to create a terror on them. When Babu becomes sick, his mother Savitri cares him but Ramani, father does not pay any attention towards his health rather he says, "Babu get up; Don't miss your school on any account"(1). But Savitri, a traditional Indian woman, cares her child Babu's health and lovingly treats by saying, "Lie down Baby you are not going to school today"(1). Here, I mean modern people like Ramani are indifferent towards others' plight but traditional Hindu religious people like Savitri are filled with love and affection, they have deep attachment to the society or family.

Ranani wants to be free from any responsibility and duty. He desires to fly as a bird in the sky without any sort of obstacle which indicates search to absolute freedom. He strongly denies even his wife's suggestions who loves him dearly and takes him as a God. Ramani comes from office to go cinema with his wife without taking children Babu, Kamala and Sumati. Savitri requests him to take their children but it goes in vain when he says, "The children can go some other day. Not a fly extra now"(20). When Kamala insists to go with them, Ranani infuriates with her and says, "Learn not to whimper before your mother". (21)

Furthermore, Ramani does not let his wife going out in his absence. He does not attempt to understand his wife's or children's desires and needs. One day, Ramani comes home faster than other days for cinema but he does not find his wife at home.

He sends his youngest daughter to call Savitri. Savitri surprisingly asks the matter of his arrival so fast. "I don't know mother. I was playing in Kutti's house when he called me up and told me to find you at once. I couldn't stop and talk to father. He looked so angry"(19), says Kamala. She does not dear to ask any question with her father because of fear she has. The fear is caused owing to the cruelty he shows to his family members. Similarly her mother is surprised because of the cruelty.

But ironically Ramani does whatever he likes even if he does not let his wife to go out. He wants to be free almost every time. He enjoys with his wife without their children. Not only with his own wife but also he does not hesitate to move freely with his office staff named Shanta Bai who divorced from her own husband. Whenever Shanta Bai is appointed in his office, slowly and gradually, he pays his attention not to her wife but Shanti Bai. Sometime he delays to arrive at home because he gives time to Shanta Bai. In this Narayan remarks, "At two o'clock he went home. He drove the car into the garage with as little noise as possible, opening the gate and then the garage door himself. He felt rather irritated afterwards, when he walked back into house from the garage."(65)

Ramani's behaviors are not normal to Savitri. He enjoys his life giving torture to others. He does not feel any sort of guilt rather he knocks on the door loudly, calling "Savitri, Savitri!"(66) a dozen times before she could get up from her bed and come to the door. Ramani severely condemns her, "Have you dined? . . . I suppose you are too sleepy to serve me . . . sometimes a man may have to return home late. One can't always be rushing back, thinking of the dinner"(66). In this situation, he would have some guilt feeling but behaves as if it was Savitri's mistake. It is actually modern male's master mentality who could not see other's life at all.

Similarly, the temple-priest who is a fairly old man is more hypocritical and worldly and less spiritual. He feels that he has an absolutely correct understanding of human beings. He is very greedy. His yard-stick of measuring people's love of religion is that they should exhibit their faith in religion by offerings to the gods. In his talk to Mari, a black-smith, he opines, "Now-a-days you fellow must to worship the God free; no offerings, not even a piece of coconut"(130). In the name of God, he tries to exploit the innocent people like Mari, Ponni etc. in fact, the priest himself is not religious man.

Thus, R. K. Narayan in his novel, *The Dark Room* strives his best to depict the hypocrisy of modern Indian people. Modern Indian people are showy by their natures who try to cover the inner reality. That is caused because of the conflict between their temptation towards western culture, that is modernity and their inherited reality that is tradition. To show such hypocritical behavior of Indian people, Narayan exploits two characters-Ramani and a priest in the novel.

Reflection of Industrial Revolution and its Effect on the Indian Society in the Novel.

The universe has become a miniature society because of the scientific development where all cultures mix into one in which Marx said, 'all that is solid melts into one' (qtd. in Bermen 1). Modernity unites all human beings. Scientific discoveries-transportation, communication and media etc. make the world small and single. Different kinds of mass media which are the result of science like radio, computer, film and T.V. have control of our lives. We cannot avoid these media because we are surrounded by them. They help the people update their life providing the hot news which ultimately mobilizes the people to adjust in the complex world. But those who cannot accommodate the new scenario have to suffer much. Ramani

and Babu, the modernist characters, who accommodate the industrial and scientific advancement, spend the life comfortably whereas Savitri, Gangu, Sumati, etc. cannot adjust in the changed industrial scenario and hence fade away or suffer. Ramani travels the places in his car, goes to the movie and enjoys his life and Babu also enjoys looking and playing cricket; however females are confined within the four walls of the house. Narayan rightly comments on Ramani's life:

> Ramani laughed faithfully and drove the car towards the river. She sat nestling close to him as he drove, and said suddenly. Let us drive round the town once and then go to the river. Ramani stopped, reversed and drove the car into the town and about the streets. I'm rather mad tonight she said. I hope you don't mind it. (71)

Because of the Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth century, human beings have been getting into new life, social and political changes and economic development. Before industrial revolution, the life was hard; people used to exploit simple machines to make their works quite easier. Socio-economic side was very poor. Agro-based economy had not maintained the standard of life. In the past, there was no development of transportation and communication. But after the dawn of industrial revolution, great changes emerged. As a result, life became comfortable and smooth. It brought many social changes. The middle class grew and progressed rapidly. Factories were started to have been run by them, they used to hire the workers in low payment and treated them as objects. In it, Marx believes, "the bourgeoisie has turned away from the family its sentimental vial, and reduced the gamily relation to a mere money relation"(23). Everything was concerned with the money, property and prestige not with familial sentiments, feelings and emotions. In the novel, Ramani does not valorize the sentiments and feelings of his wife and

children. What he focuses is his job at the Bank and his way of life. He never tries to make his life better with the assistance of Savitri. When Savitri makes up her mind to leave the house, he has not become disappointed, rather he shouts aggressively. All the pity and mercy are grasped by the reason. Ramani does not hesitate to beat his own son brutally. Narayan writes:

> In helpless anger Babu remained silent. His father slapped him on the cheek. "Don't beat me, father", he said, and Ramani gave him a few more slaps. At this point Savitri dashed forward to protect Babu. She took him aside, glaring at her husband who said, "Leave him alone, he does not need your petting". She felt faint with anger. (38)

Industrial revolution has brought the modernity and it has its effect in India also, however this revolution or modernity has also imported the negative impact to some extent, it has brought positive change. With the establishment of industries, employees are exploited physically, sexually, and mentally as well. People started to keep servants or valets in their houses. In this regard, Karl Marx states that:

> In the earlier epochs of history we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebian, and slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild masters, journeymen, apprentices, and serfs; in almost all of these classes, again subordinate gradations. (21)

Here, in *The Dark Room*, the main character Savitri scolds her cook, Ranga, she scolds him as, "Why are you in such a hurry to finish your work and go home? Home; always dying to return home. Dust and grime everywhere, at every corner. You shall not go home before ten from now. Understand me?"(74)

Furthermore, Ramani, a married but irresponsible man and a boss of Engladia Indurance Company, exploits Shanta Bai mentally as well as sexually. Because of the industrial revolution there was the emergence of many industrial factories, banks, insurances, etc. which had the sole purpose of profit. The employers used to advertise for the position of the employees. While appointing the employees, they would commodify the human beings and grasped the excessive benefit from them. As a result, the factory owners were getting rich and prosperous day by day, but the workers had to linger in the same poor and pathetic situation. The human relationship has changed into the relationship of money and profit. Humanity has faded way rather exploitation, deception was prevalent everywhere. The trace of exploitation can be deciphered in the following lines:

> Her tone was soft and pleasing. Ramani wanted to ask her if she could
> sing well but restrained himself and "yours is a very interesting story.
> Then, I suppose you saw our advertisement?"Yes, I did. I sent my
> application to all the branch offices and I was called up for interview
> only by you. (52)

Shanta Bai was not called by any other office where she applied for job except Ramani. Why did Ramani call her for interview? It is obvious that he wants her because it is easy to control her and makes the excessive use of her for his own benefit. Not only that, he has made extramarital relationship with her which ultimately brings tension in the novel.

The employeers are deceived in such a way that the information about the salary is not given previously in the advertisement and when they are selected for the job only then they come to know about their salary which is highly lower than expected. Now, it complicates them whether to accept the job in that low salary or

leave it, they are mentally panicked. This is also a kind of official exploitation. That's why modern world is not devoid of exploitation. The following line of the text clarifies the implicit exploitation done on the employees. "I had no business to imagine it because the advertisement never mentioned the amount", (55) Shanta Bai says.

Modernity has the positive influence as well. Electricity is one of the significant markers of modernity. It was discovered by Benjamin Franklin in the 1750s which has had a tremendous impact on the history of mankind because it as Charles Van Doren believes, "…dissolved the difference between night and day and masked the change of the season"(270). Moreover, it provided the new source of energy which helped to intensify the industrial revolution that dramatically changes human life. We can apparently see the influence of electricity on Babu, Sumati, Kamala, Chandru, etc. in the novel *The Dark Room*. Chandra, Babu's friend, wants to build his career in the field of electricity. He has made miniature dynamos, electric bulb and telegraph sets. To highlight the issue of electricity, Narayan writes:

> Sumati and Kamala were delighted. "It is going to beat the pavilion in the Police Inspector's house,"they said ecstatically Chandru worked wonders with piece of wire and a spanner . . . it was great triumph for Babu. He felt very proud of being responsible for the illumination. (33)

Not only this much, industrial revolution makes the life of the people excessively busy; they even cannot give the proper time for their children and wife. When the children ask the whereabouts of their father, Savitri replies, "He was so terribly busy the whole morning that I couldn't get a word with him"(77). Ramani is a modernist character who has to spend the busy hectic life whereas the traditional

character like Gangu has enough time. She goes to the house of different people to spare her time. She mostly spends her time in backbiting of other people. Traditional characters, especially women, do not want to struggle hard and make their life busy. In this regard, R. K. Narayan mentions that Gangu without asking says, "Don't think I am gossiping, but there was another person with him perhaps it is that person about whom people are taking all this nonsense"(87). Gangu here criticizes Ramani unnecessarily.

The aforementioned paragraphs evidence both positive and negative aspects of modernity and hence show how the tension between the tradition and modernity exists. Because of electricity, means of transportation, development in industrial sector; the living standard of modern people has become terribly comfortable whereas the coin has another side as well for those traditional who can not adjust in the changed scenario. Moreover, the factory owners are used to exploiting the laborers compelling them to work in low wage. In consequence, there is tension between modernity and tradition.

Colonial Impact in the Indian Society as Reflected in the Novel

The term colonialism can be understood as the specific form of cultural exploitation that developed with the expansion of Europe over the last hundred years. Colonialism is the process of the country dominating other countries with different strategies. Though colonialism was discerned as the pathetical domination in the past, nowadays any kind of hegemony can be categorized under colonialism; either it is cultural or educational or economic or something related to sports, music films, etc.

Colonialism is such a process in which tussle always exists; there is traumatic relationship between the victorious settlers and the original inhabitants. Colonialism is an act of restructuring a new community; it is believed that colonialism is the

consequent and control of other people's land. It was the European expansion of power into Asia, Africa and America, and later America started the mission of colonizing over underdeveloped and developing countries not explicitly but implicitly. However, here, we are perusing the European impact upon India and or Indian way of life.

According to Marxist critics, the earlier colonialists were per-capitalists and the modern capitalism was established along with the notion of Western. Colonialism restricted the economics, natural resources of the colonized drawing them into the problematic condition creating the complex relationship not only between the colonizers and the colonized but also among the colonized themselves.

The colonies had to supply the raw materials and the slaves for colonial consumption. The colonies had also to provide markets for European goods. Because of the colonial impact on Ramani, he always dominates his wife just as the colonizers dominate the colonized. He scolds his wife accusing of her committing many mistakes. He does not even favor the meal prepared by Savitri. He says:

> Brinjals, cucumber, radish and greens, all the twelve months in the year and all the thirty days in the month. I don't know when I shall have a little decent food to eat. I slave all day in the office for this mouthful. No lack of expenses, money for this and money for that. (2)

Here, we can see the conflict between the tradition and modernity and or the colonized and the colonizer. Savitiri is a colonized character whereas Ramani is the colonizer.

The colonialist used to take English language and English culture as the means of exploiting the orients. Wherever they wanted, they used to impose English language in the academia and institutions in the colonies. They themselves wanted to

teach, write about and research the orient. It is a main way of colonizing that is dominating the orients.

Gangu, in spite of being the colonized, wants to know more about English language and English culture. Because she is shaped in such a way that she sees nothing magnificent beyond English language. She can also be considered as the orientalist and or colonialist. Narayan comments, "For serving on public bodies she felt she ought to know a little more English than she needed to read fairy tales and write letters to her husband at the beginning of their married life."(15)

In the same manner, Babu also prefers to read in English school and makes the study of everything with the use of English language. He prefers to see English film at the cost of Hindi. That sort of tendency appears in him because of the influence of the English people. Whereas Sumati representing the nationality and tradition states that she does not like English language and English film at all. In this regard, we can see the glimpse of clash between the colonial product (Babu) and its opponent (Sumati) which is substantiated by the following lines:

> "I don't like Indian films, Mother. I would like to be sent to *Frankenstein,* which is coming next week". Babu says. "I don't like English films. Let us go to this tomorrow". Sumati said. "It is because you don't understand English and films". Said Babu. As if you were a master of English and understood all that they say in the films: why do you pretend? Said Sumati. (25)

Colonial discourse about the orient including oriertalism plays vital role in serving the purpose of European expansion, but it also brought some sort of resistance in almost everywhere in the non-western world.

In the text also Savitri resists the normalized rules practiced in India just as the colonized resist the colonizers. She is fed up of the nagging and bullying behaviors of Ramani who is the embodiment of colonialism and decides to desert him, the house and the children behind, and passes her time individually. She strongly resists on the domination and humiliation of Ramani and challenges, "Do you think I am going to stay here? . . . Do you think that I will stay in your house, breathe the air of your property, drink the water here and eat food buy with your money? No . . ."(88)

Colonizers occupy the land of colonized and absorb their power and rule them as master does to the slave. The colonized has to follow whatever the colonizers order them. Ramani is interpreted as the supporter of colonialism whereas Savitri as an opponent of that sort colonialism and domination. Though she tries to be free from the clutch of domination, she becomes a mere puppet in the hands of her husband and follows whatever he orders her. Acceptance of one's lot rather than protest or revolt has been ingrained in her and she has been taught to find her happiness in it, although it might be irksome to other. The woman cannot be herself in the society which is exclusively masculine. Narayan writers in the novel:

> How impotent she was, she thought, she had not the slightest power to do anything at home, and that after fifteen years of married life Baby looked very ill and she was powerless to keep him in bed; she felt she ought to have asserted herself a little more at the beginning of her married life and then all would have been well. (6)

Savitri seems to be bold and brave but in the hands of her husband, who is tyrannical and unkind, becomes weak and powerless. Women in particular life are judged by man's low, as though they are not women but men. This sort of attitude

creates the tension between the male and the female which is analogous to the colonizers and the colonized.

Colonialism has influenced the Indian people in such a way that they commence to consume or take every European mores and activities as their own. But it is not applicable to all Indians, so there is the emergence of disparity between the modern characters who want to update themselves in changing circumstances, and traditional characters who want only to preserve culture. Babu, being a modern character, always desires to watch and play cricket whereas his mother and sisters do not emphasize cricket because they are traditional characters. Because of two diverse attitudes, there is always a conflict or misunderstanding amongst the characters just as the clash seen between the colonized and the colonizers. Babu is impressed by the westerners so deeply that he rejects even the tiffin if he is not provided with money for cricket fee. He wants to adopt the whole western life, sports, language at the cost of his own original Indian life style, mores and games. To show his inclination towards cricket, Narayan brings about the following lines in text. "Mother, I won't touch the Tiffin unless you promise to give me my cricket fee tomorrow. I must give four annas to the captain". (80)

Thus, colonization of almost two centuries, India was deeply affected and Indian people were suffered from it. People like Ramani learnt to dominate and exploit his wife and workers in his house and office. It is completely the Western master mentality to over look others. Babu and Gangu, the two other characters are influenced by the Western form of life who try to adopt the Western culture. On the other hand, Savitri like characters are victimized by the attitude and behavior of the characters who are influenced by western mentality, which is the root cause of tension in the Indian society. Hence modernity tried to over power the tradition which is

some how static. That tension between tradition and modernity created dynamism in the Indian society which the novelist, R. K. Narayan has vividly depicted in this novel, *The Dark Room.*

IV. Conclusion

It is, with the evidences of the aforementioned illustrations, firmly averred that R. K. Narayan's famous novel, *The Dark Room* has depicted the issue of tension between tradition and modernity in colonial Indian society. Because of tension, there is internal dynamics in Indian society and Indian nation-state in general. The tension is primarily seen between the female and male characters that represent the tradition and modernity respectively. Along with the characters, Malgudi, the setting of the novel is also presented as a platform for the change from tradition to modernity. Moreover, the industrial revolution, colonial mentality and modern hypocrisy have remarkable influence on the characters which further support to add some bricks in the emergence of tension.

The Dark Room, at first, deals with the early phase of Malgudi that is colonial Indian which presents the society as primitive, religious and utterly patriarchal. The central female character Savitri is a paragon of this kind of society. She, having the secondary position in the society, represents the position of all women in the pre-colonial India. In such a society, we hardly find the account of the scientific and other modern awareness, for instance, clothing, film, interest in sports, use of modern machines and vehicles etc.

However, in the successive chapters, R. K. Narayan presents the same city Malgudi, in its later phase, which represents the modern and scientific society. In this phase, the modern character Ramani is highly concerned by attributing the modern dispositions like independent life, interest in film, use of luxurious vehicle, etc. Ramani strives his best to subvert the ancient society due to western influence. Atheist Ramani is indifferent towards his duties and responsibilities in a family and

even does not hesitate to make extra-marital relationship with Shanta Bai, which consequently brings about tension in the novel.

Because of the Industrial Revolution, there was change in Indian society which is vividly seen in the novel. It has made the life of the people comfortable and happy, but if the people can not accommodate the new scenario, they have to suffer much. Ramani and Babu, the modern characters who accommodate the industrial and scientific advancement spend the life comfortably whereas Savitri, Gangu, Sumati, Kamala etc. can not adjust in the changed industrial scenario due to their unshakable faith in religion and responsibilities and hence suffer. This displays the tension in owing two incompatible entities.

Tension and internal dynamics in Indian society happen because of the impact of westernization, modernization and colonization. Colonialism has influenced the Indian people in such a way that they commence to imitate every European mores and activities as their own. But it is not applicable to all Indian people. So there is the emergence of disparity between the modern characters who want to reform themselves in changing circumstances and the traditional character who want to preserve their own ancient culture. Traditional values are followed and implemented by the females and modern and western values are imitated by the male. Thus, there is almost the subversion of the originality of both cultures, and there is double and partial existence of these cultures which ultimately result into tension that brings about dynamism in society.

In this way, Narayan's *The Dark Room* visualizes the tension between tradition and modernity, which cause the internal dynamics in Indian society. The tension appears because of the female's dominant faith in primitive, religious, patriarchal norms and values and male's desire to follow the western forms of life.

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